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A P-3C Orion aircraft from Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, also known as the Skinny Dragons, takes off from Naval Air Facility Misawa runway on one of the squadron's final missions while repositioned to the northeastern - Japan base. VP-4 is temporarily assigned to NAF Misawa in support of Operation Tomodachi.

NAVAL AIR FACILITY MISAWA, Japan -- Patrol Squadron (VP) 4 is preparing to depart Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan in the next few days after completing their mission in support of Operation Tomodachi.

VP-4 will return to Kadena Air Base, Japan, where they are currently on a six-month deployment from Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

The squadron arrived March 12, to assist after a 9.0-magnitude earthquake triggered a devastating tsunami that devastated northeast Japan.

"We were supporting the search-and-rescue operations and providing real time data on the damage caused by the earthquake and tsunami," said Lt. j.g. Hector Robles, a navigator-communicator with VP-4. "We surveyed the area and provided images and video to the USS Essex (LHD 2) and USS Ronald Regan (CVN 76)."

While assigned to NAF Misawa, two VP-4 aircraft flew 17 sorties, surveying various locations in the northeast coast of Japan. The four-propeller P-3C Orion had varying flight times, with some missions as short as three hours.

"The flight times vary," said Robles, a native of Fajardo, Puerto Rico. "Some missions can keep a plane on station for up to ten hours."

While the aircrafts were not performing their traditional role while in Misawa, Robles said he was proud of

the work he and his crewmates performed on a daily basis.

“We are normally a tactical aircraft,” he said about the P-3C’s intended mission. “But when you do missions like these to assist people, it feels very rewarding.”

For more news from Naval Air Facility Misawa, visit <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/misawa/index.htm> or check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nafmisawa.